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ABSTRACT

This book describes the classrooms and homes of working class children struggling not only to learn to read but also to deal with the kind of subjectivity that literacy simultaneously holds out to and refuses them. One theme threaded throughout the book concerns the ways in which students' engagements with literacies are connected with their own histories. The chapters draw upon mixed genres, including narrative histories of children's lives and engagements with literacies, interpretive readings of other histories of engagement with literacies, and essayist reflections on educational theory and practice. The narratives highlight how working class students engage with middle class literacies and how those engagements are interwoven with relations with others. Two chapters describe how two working class K-2 students participated in literacy practices as they moved between the social worlds of home and school. The histories of these children are framed by reflective chapters that also consider narratives written by adults (educational scholars and literary writers) looking back on their experiences growing up in the working classes. The book argues that feeling and valuing are integral to what it means to know. An appendix presents a staff review of one kindergarten student's learning. (Contains 112 references.) (SM)

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